

Asking, Seeking, Knocking: Questing after God's Kingdom! Matthew 7:7-11

A young man goes into a drug store to buy 3 boxes of chocolate. The pharmacist asks, "What size: small, medium, or large?" "One of each." he said, "I've been seeing this girl for a while and she's really beautiful. I want the chocolate because I think tonight is *"the"* night. We're having dinner with her parents and then we're going out. If she lets me hold her hand I'm going to give her the small box, if she lets me kiss her on the cheek I'm going to give her the medium box and if she lets me kiss her on the lips I'm going to give her the big box.

The young man makes his purchase and leaves. Later that evening, he sits down to dinner with his girlfriend and her parents. He asks if he might give the blessing and they agree. He begins the prayer, but continues praying for several minutes. The girl leans over and says, "You never told me that you were such a religious person." He leans over to her and says, "You never told me that your father is a pharmacist."

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ...

For everyone who asks receives,
and everyone who searches finds,
and for everyone who knocks,
the door will be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8

If you guessed that Jesus was talking about prayer, you would be basically right; but not the prayers you were thinking about. What if I told you that "*asking, seeking & knocking*" are not directed towards your daily needs, your life concerns, but towards the life God wants you to live. Lets back things up a bit to make this point clear.

Jesus is delivering what has now come to be known as the Sermon on the Mount. This message is also recorded in Luke's Gospel with slightly different details; one of them being that Jesus was speaking not only to His disciples, but to the crowd who had begun to follow after Him. Luke 6:12-37

The main point of Jesus' entire sermon was how to live as a God honoring person.

- For what should your heart be longing? How to live righteously before God.
- How do you keep God's laws? By honoring them in your heart not just in your actions.
- How do you practice your faith? Quietly and humbly, just you and God in fellowship and conversation?

- How do you pray to God? Not with long-winded, fancy-worded, repetitious prayers, but with a simple heartfelt prayer coupled with seeking to glorify God with your life.
- And for what should you be asking God? (here is the point to notice), you need not be concerned – or praying – about your personal needs, food, clothing, shelter. God knows you need all these and will gladly provide such ...

but strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
Matthew 6:33

So if we place Jesus' "*ask, seek, and knock*" remarks in context with the rest of his message, Surprise! He is not saying "*ask for what you need, persistently pursuing after God until He gives you such*" Remember Jesus has just said that God, being a good Father, both knows, and wants to give us, what is good for us ... if – we dedicate our life to first seeking His kingdom and doing His will.

So when Jesus says that, *everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened*, He is talking about our personal relationship with God. Jesus is still on the subject of dedicating our entire life to QUESTING after a God honoring life; *'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled.'* Matthew 5:6

For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

What if this verse read, "if you don't ask after God, you will get only what you learn second-hand, if you don't seek after God you will never really find Him, and if you don't knock, the important doors will never be opened to you," because that is exactly what is being implied here.

But WHY does Jesus keep emphasizing our need be in persistent pursuit of God? Because any life lived less determined to honor God, is only half the life we could be living. Let me illustrate.

I could ask you, "*where do you live?*" That will give me some information.

- But it will not bring me to your house.
- I will not know how you live.
- I will not know what your neighborhood looks like.

Conversely, if I don't, I'm really saying, "*I'm not interested in knowing anything about you.*"

**Isn't it the same with our relationship with God?
To ask is, first, to acquire basic information.**

If I ask, I learn.

- It leads to knowing, not just that there is a God.
- But what kind of God is He?
- What does the Bible tell me about God?
- Is He still the same with me, as He was with those I read about in the Bible?

The answers to those questions then lead us to ask some basic questions about our own life.

- Can we still act and think and believe the way we used to?
- Can we hang out with our old friends?
- Do we have to change our attitudes?
- Do we have to change our choices, our values?

These are all important questions, but just our "asking" is still in the kindergarten phase of spirituality; look at what Hebrew people were taught to ask:

ASK now about former ages,
long before your own,
ever since the day that
God created human beings on the earth ...
Deuteronomy 4:32

The Bible continues on

***ASK** from one end of heaven to the other: has anything so great as this ever happened or has it's like ever been heard of? Has any people ever heard the voice of a god speaking out of a fire, as you have heard, and lived? Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by terrifying displays of power, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? Deuteronomy 4:32-34*

In other words, ask people about the stuff that happened to before you met God, which are good questions to ask. Now, here is the answer that God gave them in reply.

To you it was shown so that
you would acknowledge
that the Lord is God;
there is no other besides Him.
Deuteronomy 4:35

These were the basic questions that gave the people Israel their foundation.

Crossing the Jordan River, they were instructed

*Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children **ASK** you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever." Joshua 4:5-7*

They were taught to ask. These days, we tell our children, "Don't ask me!"

Then, when Jesus came along, God said we could ask for more:

Whatever you ask for in prayer
with faith, you will receive.'."

Matthew 21:22

If we don't know that WE CAN ASK, we're going to be stuck trying to work things out ourselves. The basics of "believing" comes from learning that WE CAN ASK.

*If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the **Holy Spirit** to those who ASK him!" Luke 11:12-13*

That's basic information. That is our starting place. Ask Him, so that God might give you His Holy Spirit to live with you, and guide you further along into God's truths.

Our whole relationship with God is built around ASKING.

If any of you is lacking in wisdom,
ask God, who gives to all generously
and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.

James 1:5

Of course, the Bible is talking about GODLY WISDOM. Want it ??? ASK!
You can't get anywhere with God until you have this basic understanding. Writing to believers, the Apostle John said,

Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him. 1 John 3:21-22

The more you obey and seek to please God, THE MORE YOU CAN ASK. I told my teenagers... you want the car? Hold your tongue. Clean your room. Treat your Mom right. You DON'T want the car? Fine. Keep on truckin'!

ASKING: That's the basics!

But then after asking about God comes SEEKING after God.

I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently
find me - God. Proverbs 8:17

This is step 2. In order to seek, I must first know that there is something TO SEEK.

King David wrote, *One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.* Psalms 27:4

In order to seek, I have to have grown a desire for more.

Blessed are those who hunger
and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Matthew 5:6

- I have to develop a craving.
- To seek is to invest time in the quest.
- I have to be willing to hunt for something more than what I currently have.

If I ask for your address, and I really want to find you, then I have to SEEK you out! I have to make an effort.

- Jesus as the "truth," IS NOT just a truth.
- Jesus as the "way," IS NOT just a way.
- The life Jesus offers IS NOT just a life.

I have to WORK to find THE TRUTH, THE WAY, THE LIFE!

Without faith it is impossible to please God,
for whoever would approach Him must believe
that He exists and that He rewards those who seek him.
Hebrews 11:6

Sincerely, intensely, determinedly, with purpose ... if I seek, I will be rewarded. ***But, seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*** Matthew 6:32-33

WHAT THINGS???? An abundant life: Spiritual. Physical. Emotional. Social. Financial.

When I first asked, I got answers. When I begin to seek I get MORE THAN JUST ANSWERS!

The Lord looks down from heaven ...
to see if there are any who are wise,
who seek after God.

Psalm 14:2

Or to put it more bluntly...

"Seek Me and live" - God

Amos 5:4

First ASK, then SEEK, then KNOCK

Writing from heaven to the churches, Jesus said, *I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.* Revelation 3:8

By asking and then seeking, I am led to doors. *Jesus said, I am the gate (the door). Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.* John 10:9

Jesus also said ...

'Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it. Matthew 7:13-14

The Special Things of God that are hidden from most people are behind this door. But when I find it, and I knock, it is opened to me. When I knock on God's door, what do I find? LIFE and a LIVING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!!

Happy is the one who listens to Me,
watching daily at My gates,
waiting beside My doors.
For whoever finds Me finds life ...

Proverbs 8:34,35

This is not just about living a godly life, it is also spiritual revelation; my opportunity to KNOW God in a way that can only be attained by those who – *hungering and thirsting for righteousness*, begin asking, seeking, and then knocking at God's door.

In closing, here was Paul's final prayer for his friends in the Ephesus Church; I am sure he is still offering the same prayer for you....

I pray that, according to the riches of His glory, God may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through His Spirit; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.

And [I pray] that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3:17-19

Ask, seek, and knock, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God; this is what we need to pray about today and every day for the rest of our earthly life.